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## Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, our gracious King, You are the one clear power of love in the midst of lesser powers. Lord, thank You for giving us the confidence to know that You hear and answer prayer.

We pray for those who seek to recover and rebuild after the tornadoes in many States. Have mercy upon them as they deal with the ravages of nature.

Lord, teach our Senators how to discover Your love in each other and to see Your magnificent image in all creation.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

### EXECUTIVE SESSION

### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will pro-

ceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Samantha D. Elliott, of New Hampshire, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Hampshire.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HIRONO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

### KENTUCKY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, the tornadoes that hit Kentucky this past weekend were some of the most widespread, severe, and devastating in our State's history.

It is still difficult to comprehend the vast scope of the storm. Nearly 40 tornadoes touched down across 6 States. One tornado in Kentucky stayed on the ground for over 200 miles—200 miles. This was potentially the longest continuous path of any tornado in U.S. history.

Towns have been reduced to rubble. Families are picking up pieces of their shattered lives. Most tragically, our Governor announced today that more than 60 Kentuckians are confirmed to have lost their lives. Many more remain unaccounted for.

This is the worst storm to hit Kentucky in my lifetime. The tornadoes have caused considerable damage in 15 counties all across the Commonwealth. Thousands lost their homes. Tens of thousands are still without power. This was, in the words of one meteorologist,

“the worst-case scenario” for destruction. And it came during the Christmas season. Families are supposed to be gathering soon for rest, relaxation, and reunion. Now, so many Kentuckians are facing exactly the opposite.

The whole country is becoming acquainted with Mayfield, KY, likely our hardest hit city. Mayfield is a town of 10,000 in the Jackson Purchase. It has been known for the beautiful Greek Revival facade of the Mayfield First United Methodist Church. Now, First United is completely gone, and the town is literally leveled to the ground.

Mayfield's candle factory was operating in full swing this weekend to keep up with the Christmas demand. It was once a mainstay of the community, employing hundreds. On Friday night, the factory was turned into a scene of absolute horror. Many of the employees who were working that evening are feared dead. Rescue operations are ongoing. At least 40 employees were rescued initially. One was saved after being trapped under 5 feet of rubble for hours. The devastation there is absolute.

The tornado was so powerful that it ripped 27 train cars off their tracks in Earlington and scattered them across a field. A family photograph that was picked up by the storm in Dawson Springs, KY, was carried nearly 130 miles by the wind and discovered over in Indiana.

All across Western Kentucky, residents spent their Saturday and Sunday clearing debris and collecting clothes and possessions that had been scattered. Families were left to inspect the cinderblocks where their houses once stood. The cheery lights of Christmas-time have been replaced by absolute destruction.

Kentucky has been devastated, but we have not been defeated. Kentuckians are resilient people who will stay strong and united through the crisis.

I am incredibly grateful to the first responders who have been on the

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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